

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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TAGS: CVIS, SREF, FR

SUBJECT: LEBANESE VISA APPLICANTS

REF: STATE 190983, STATE L82765, STATE 174715, PARIS

20931, PARIS 19366

1. THE DEGREE OF THIS EMBASSY'S CONCERN FOR SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE VISA PROBLEM, WHETHER BY INTRODUCTION OF A NEW REFUGEE PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER MEANS, WAS SET FORTH IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL IN PARIS 20931. TO REPEAT THE GIST OF THAT MESSAGE, THE IMMIGRATION PRESSURES POSED BY THE SUBSTANTIAL LEBANESE EMIGRE COMMUNITY IN FRANCE ARE INCREASING DAILY AND THESE PRESSURES CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY CONTAINED WITHIN THE GUIDELINES HERETOFORE SET FORTH BY THE DEPARTMENT.

2. SPECIFICALLY, THIS EMBASSY HANDLED A NONIMMIGRANT CASELOAD IN THE JUST-CONCLUDED (JANUARY-JUNE 1976) SIX-MONTH PERIOD WHICH WAS FIVE TIMES GREATER THAN THAT WITH WHICH IT HAD TO CONTEND IN THE COMPARABLE PERIOD OF 1975. THE NUMBERS, OF COURSE, ARE RELATIVELY SMALL (I.E. CASELOAD: 672; VISAS ISSUED 373 VISAS REFUSED 299) BUT THEY ARE CLEARLY MOUNTING EXPONENTIALLY. AS PROOF OF THIS, WE NOTE THAT THE JULY 1976 LEBANESE NIV CASELOAD IS 228 -- A FIGURE WHICH PROJECTS TO A SIX-MONTH TOTAL OF 1368, OR TWICE THAT OF THE PRECEDING

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SIX MONTHS. OF THIS SEVEN-MONTH TOTAL OF 900 NIV

CASES, 474 (OR 53) WERE REFUSED. BASED ON ITS EXPERIENCE DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT ALL THESE REFUSED APPLICANTS ARE INTENDING IMMIGRANTS AND THEREFORE WOULD DOUBTLESS APPLY FOR REFUGEE OR PAROLE STATUS WERE THIS TO BECOME AVAILABLE TO THEM.

3. THE IMMIGRANT VISA PICTURE IS ALSO ONE OF SUBSTANTIAL

GROWTH IN PARIS: 39 ISSUANCE IN THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS (JANUARY-JULY) OF 1976 VS 3 FOR THE COMPARABLE PERIOD OF 1975. AGAIN, THE INCREASE IS EXPONENTIAL--WITH PROJECTED SECOND-HALF FIGURES SHOWING A THREE-FOLD GROWTH OVER THOSE FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 1976.

4. THOUGH THE FOREGOING FIGURES MAY SEEM SMALL, THEY DO NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT EITHER THE MAGNITUDE OR THE ANGUISH OF THE LEBANESE VISA PROBLEM (THE DIMENSIONS OF WHICH WERE EXPLAINED IN PARIS REFTEL.) NOR FOR THAT MATTER DO THEY CLEARLY DEPICT THE SIZE OF THE POTENTIAL CASELOAD FOR A LEBANESE REFUGEE PROGRAM, SINCE (A) SOME OF THOSE PERMANENTLY UPROOTED BY THE LEBANESE DEBACLE ARE NOT LEBANESE NATIONALS (AND ARE THEREFORE NOT REFLECTED IN THESE TOTALS) AND (B) THE HIGH NIV REFUSAL RATE (OF WHICH THE LEBANESE COMMUNITY IS WELL AWARE) HAS DOUBTLESS DISCOURAGED A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL VISA SEEKERS.

5. AS THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPHS MAY SUGGEST, EMBASSY PARIS FINDS ITSELF UNABLE FULLY TO SHARE THE SANGUINE VIEWS OF UNHCR. WE CONCUR THAT THE GOF IS NOT TRYING TO EVICT THE LEBANESE FROM FRANCE. INDEED THE REVERSE IS TRUE, AS WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED. THE MAJORITY OF LEBANESE DO HAVE MEANS OF SUPPORT, BUT THESE APPEAR IN MANY INSTANCES NOT TO BE INEXHAUSTIBLE. FINALLY WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE (AS OUR REFUSAL RATE INDICATES) TO FIND THAT THE MAJORITY REALLY INTEND TO RETURN TO LEBANON.
GAMMON

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